

REMARKS

In the Final Office Action of June 18, 2001, claims 1-20 were rejected on various combinations of prior art references under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). The rejections were essentially a repeat of the rejections made in the prior Office Action of March 1, 2001. On September 17, 2001, applicant filed a response to the Final Office Action of June 18, 2001, in which the claim rejections were again traversed. In response, the Examiner issued an Advisory Action of October 2, 2001, which stated that applicant's response to the final rejection does not place the application in condition for allowance. On the second page of the Advisory Action, it is stated that applicant's main emphasis is on the limitations of the water having a copper concentration of 0.01 ppb or less. It is further said that the most reasonable and broadest interpretation that can be taken by the Examiner is that the silicon wafer can be stored in water in which, because of the way in which the range of copper concentration is claimed, copper does not necessarily have to exist. Suzuki et al. is said to place the silicon wafer in water which reads on the claim limitations.

On October 22, 2001, the undersigned discussed the application including the final rejection and the prior art with the Examiner. The courtesy of the telephone interview is gratefully acknowledged by the applicant.

With this background, this Preliminary Amendment is being filed in order to improve the form of the claims for purposes of further prosecution. Claim 1 is being amended to add the limitations of claim 2 thereto, with claim 2 being canceled in view

thereof. Likewise, claim 4 is being amended to add the limitations of claim 5 thereto, with claim 5 being canceled in view thereof. Claims 7 and 9 are being amended to depend from claim 4 in view of the cancellation of claim 5. New claim 21 is being added.

With regard to claims 1 and 4 as amended herein, the prior art, including Hayashida et al. and Suzuki et al., do not show or suggest such claims. In particular, such references do not show or suggest storage of a wafer in storage water which contains Cu at a concentration of 0.01 ppb or less and a surfactant. With respect to new claim 21, the prior art does not show or suggest that the concentration of Cu in storage water is regulated to 0.01 ppb or less. Even assuming it is known in the art to have water containing Cu at a concentration of 0.01 ppb or less, nothing in the art teaches or suggests that the concentration of Cu in storage water is regulated to 0.01 ppb or less, in the manner of the present invention.

With respect to claims 3 and 6-20, such claims are submitted to patentably distinguish over the art for the reasons previously provided by applicant.

Therefore, examination of the application based on this Preliminary Amendment, and allowance of the application, are respectfully requested.

If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at the Los Angeles telephone number (213) 337-6846 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance.

If there are any fees due in connection with the filing of this response, please
charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 50-1314.

Respectfully submitted,

HOGAN & HARTSON L.L.P.

Date: November 15, 2001

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Version with markings to show changes made:

IN THE CLAIMS:

Rewrite claim 1 as follows:

1. (Twice Amended) A storage water used for storage of a silicon wafer in water, wherein the storage water contains Cu at a concentration of 0.01 ppb or less and a surfactant.

Cancel claim 2, without prejudice.

Rewrite claim 4 as follows:

4. (Twice Amended) A method of storing a silicon wafer in water, comprising the steps of preparing storage water containing Cu at a concentration of 0.01 ppb or less and a surfactant, and storing a silicon wafer in the prepared storage water.

Cancel claim 5, without prejudice.

Rewrite claim 7 as follows:

7. (Twice Amended) A method of storing a silicon wafer in water according to claim [5] 4, wherein the step of storing a silicon wafer includes providing a silicon wafer having a hydrophobic surface.

Rewrite claim 9 as follows:

9. (Twice Amended) A method of storing a silicon wafer in water according to claim [5] 4, wherein the step of storing the silicon wafer comprises storing the silicon wafer immediately after polishing.

Please add the following new claim:

--21. (New) A regulating method of a storage water, wherein the concentration of Cu in the storage water is regulated to 0.01 ppb or less.--